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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

THE TONNAGE DUTY QUESTION.

Desiring to oblige the gentlemen to whom the subjoined letter of Mr. WILLIAMS was addressed, and who requested its insertion in our paper, we think it due to fairness to accompany it with the letter of Mr. Douglas, to which it is a reply. We therefore, at some inconvenience, make room

THE TONNAGE DUTY QUESTION.

UNITED STATES HOTEL, WASHINGTON, JANUARY 28, 1854.

GENTLEMEN: I avail myself of the first leisure I have had, since the receipt of your kind letter of the 21st instant, to respond to your request to favor you with my " views upon the subject of river and harbor improvements, and particularly upon the measure of tonnage duties recommended in the message and accompanying documents transmixed to Congress at the commencement of its present session by the President of the United States."

As the President's recommendation on that subject is rathe indefinite, I have looked to a letter directed by a distinguished Senator of our own State to the Governor of that State, bearing date January 2, 1854, to learn the details of the recommendation as well as the reasons in favor of its adoption.

The plan, then, as I understand it, consists, first, in the passage of an act of Congress giving its consent that the States may either separately or in confederation improve all the harbors and navigable rivers within their limits or on their borders, and that they may for this purpose lay duties of tonnage upon all boats and vessels navigating the same; and, secondly, in the complete and entire surrender of river and harbor improvements by Congress to the in the legislation of the country upon a subject of deep and increasing interest; and recommended, as it is, by persons having all the claim to respect which high official station can confer, it should, and doubtless will, receive by Congress and the country full and mature consideration.

In determining upon the relative merits of the present system of appropriations of money out of the National Treasury by Congress, to be expended under the direction of the President, and the proposed system to be prosecuted under separate or confederated State authority with money raised by duties of tonnage, efficiency and economy are important if not controlling considerations, and in both these respects, it seems to me, the old system is the preferable one; it is certainly the most efficient and economical. Under it the money is in the Treasury, and there is nothing to do but to appropriate and expend it; whilst under the proposed system to improve the navigation of the Mississippi river, a compact or articles of confederation is to be entered into by the nine States bounded by that river: each of these States is then to pass a law in conformity with the compact; then nine commis when they have collected the duties and paid them into the treasury, they will be precisely at the point from which we set out under the old system. The nine commissioners will have to appropriate the money, is necessary to make from the Falls of St. Anthony to the

ment was sufficient to show the superiority of the old over the proposed system in point both of efficiency and economy. But let us look at the practical operation a little more in detail. First, a compact is to be formed by and between nine States. How is this to be done? I suppose by a convention of delegates from each State. How and where is this convention to be held? Who is to take the initiative? Is it to be by legislative or executive authority? How are the States to be represented? According to population or according to the extent of their territory on the river, or on what other principle? . If only two States send delegates, are they to have power to form a compact binding on the other States, or must the whole scheme be abandoned? But let us suppose that these difficulties are all obvisted and the convention duly organized at Memphis. What is to be the extent of their authority? Are they to have power to make a compact obligatory upon the States, or is it to be submitted to and | many worse omnibuses than this. ratified by the States? What is to be the nature of the compact? Is it to be in the nature of the old articles of confederation under which the Continental Congress was held, or is it to be simply a contract between the States? If so, how is it to be enforced? If by the separate legis lation of States, what would be the consequence if some of the States skould refuse to legislate on the subject! But let it be supposed that the confederacy is formed and organized by the necessary legislation and the appointment of the nine commissioners: what is to be the tenure of their office and the extent and nature of their power? Is it to be both legislative and executive ? or are the States to legislate from time to time on the subject? If further legislation should become necessary, what would be the consequence if some of the States should refuse to legislate, or if their legislation should be contradictory or inconsistent? The subject is fruitful and might be extended, but this is sufficient to suggest to any reflecting mind the difficulties that must be encountered the moment an attempt is made to put into practice the proposed system. Indeed, it was these difficulties, as demonstrated by actual experience, that led to the abandonment of the old confederation and the substitution of the present constitution of the United States in its stead. The confederacy was found to be altogether inadequate to the exigency of the times, though the thirteen States to be governed by it contained only a population of about three million of souls. It was to have an efficient government, capable of making and executing its own laws, to do for the States what they could not conveniently do for themselves through their State Governments, that the General Government was ordained and established. One of the mos important things which experience proved could not bet conveniently done by the Continental Congress and the separate State Governments was the regulation of com-

of other small confederacies ! The importance of river and harbor improvements and the power of Congress is admitted by our learned Senator some form and exercised to a greater or less extent by deracy on the other, and between them I apprehend exeach successive Congress and every Administration since perience shows little difference. I do not pretend to

merce; and now it is gravely proposed, in this age of pro-

gress, to take a step backward and abandon one of the

most important functions of the Government, not to one

confederacy of thirteen States, but the Mississippi confe-

deracy of nine States, the Ohio confederacy of six States,

the Delaware confederacy of three States, and a number

THE WEEKLY NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER the adoption of the Federal Constitution. All acts of Con-, know how it is in other States, but, judging from our exgress providing for the erection of lighthouses, the plant- perience in Illinois, the balance sheet would not certain-Pollars, payable in advance.

For the long Sessions of Congress, (averaging eight snags, the dredging of channels, the inspection of steaming of buoys, the construction of piers, the removal of months, the price will be Two Dollars; for the short
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Il he made to any one who shall order and pay for all the safety of a state of the security of the safety of t existence of this power and the propriety of its exercise in some form." And upon its importance he says: "The great and growing interest of navigation is too important to be overlooked or disregarded. Mere negative action will not answer. The irregular and vascillating policy which has marked our legislation on this subject is ruinand to continue the irregular and vascillative policy which all local taxes upon produce or merchandise exported to he so justly deprecates. Congress has the power and it a foreign market come out of the profits of the producer. is their duty to make this improvement, and not attempt A farmer ships from Chicago, Illinois, one hundred barto throw it back on the States, where, to say the least, it cannot be so conveniently exercised.

But the President as well as our learned Senator says the legislation of Congress on the subject has heretofore substance, that Congress has not appropriated more ceeded in getting a small appropriation once in four or five years; that the amount was so small that most of it was used in purchasing machinery to commence the works; and that, failing to get appropriations for one, two, three, and some times four years, the machinery was sold at auction; and that as a general rule the money was not May not this become very annoying to navigators? wisely and economically applied; that the money was expended under the direction of professional men, whose knowledge and science in the line of their profession were only equalled by their profound ignorance of all those local and practical questions which ought to determine the site and plan of the improvement; whereas, in his opinion, it should be under the supervision of intelligent and experienced steamboat captains or pilots. With all deference, I submit that this does not constitute any solid objection to the old system. It amounts only to this, that Congress and the President have not heretofore done their duty; and what assurance have we that the State authorities, under the proposed plan, will do any better? So far as there is any force in the objection, it applies alike to both systems. No system administered by men who will not do their duty can be expected to would seem to be to reform the unfaithful agents, and not to abandon the system. Let the system which is good States. This certainly proposes a very important change | be preserved and perfected, and the "ruinous" practice

under it which is bad be reformed. But it is said that the bills which Congress has passed on this subject are legislative omnibuses, in which all sorts of werks were crowded together, good and bad, wise and foolish, national and local. A bill of this kind, in my opinion, should be an omnibus, embracing all the extended country which require the fostering care of the Government, charged with the protection, preservation, and improvement of the navigating interests of the coun-

try. That some works of doubtful expediency have been and will continue to be embraced is incident to human nature. "To err is human." This is abundantly provat legislation upon any subject should be abandoned. Without attempting to deny that in some instances money has been unwisely appropriated to river and harbor improvements, I affirm that appropriations thereto are not as mark the appropriations of money by Congress for other but that too little has been appropriated for improvements that ought to be made.

interest of the country and to protect the lives and property of our people every where.

evil. The objection applies to the proposed system as assert the existence of this power and the propriety of its well as the present. It is as prevalent in State as in exercise in some form. Congressional legislation. In our own State it was applied to our internal improvement system, which resulted, as we know, in a debt of eleven millions of dollars, and but fifty-five miles of railroad, worth in cash about \$50,000! It is to be hoped Congress has not made

draw river and harbor improvements from the perils of usually been a death struggle and a doubtful issue. We the political arena." It does not belong to the arena of have generally succeeded with an appropriation once in partisan politics, and there is no occasion or excuse for four or five years; in other words, we have, upon an averof Congress, forgetful and in violation of their duty, will veto. When we did succeed a large portion of the approconnect it with party politics, do not the same parties printing was expended in providing dredging machines exist in the States? And will they not exist in the new confederacies to be formed under the proposed system, and will there be no perils of the political arena there ?

It is said that the costs of either system would be a the present system it costs nothing or next to nothing to collect that tax. It is now collected by the revenue ofproposed plan new collectors must be appointed at every Soon the country was again startled by the frightful ac port, and I suppose the States or confederacies would find it necessary to have treasurers to receive and keep the money and auditors to audit accounts. Without it must amount to a very considerable sum, as it would be collected in small items. I have understood that in some of the small collection districts of the United States the cost of collecting the revenue is about equal to the

Our distinguished Senator says "that system which commerce." This it may be admitted is true, and I is far preferable to the proposed system. But he proday's experience teaches us-that public works of every description can be made at a much smaller cost by private enterprise, or by the local authorities directly interested in the improvement, than when constructed by the Federal Government." I do not understand why the astute Senator inserted "by private enterprise." He does not propose to commit river and harbor improvements to "private enterprise," but to States or confedein the most emphatic manner. In relation to the power racies. The comparison should, therefore, be between of Congress he says: "This power has been affirmed in the United States on the one side, and a State or confe-

y be in favor of the State. I have thus far spoken in reference to the efficiency and economy of the two systems. There is another aspect of the subject which strikes us as a very interesting and important one. The costs of both systems, it is said, is a tax upon commerce. There is, however, this important difference: Under the present system it falls exclusively upon foreign commerce, leaving the internal trade among the States free and unfettered, whilst the proposed system throws the burden chiefly upon domestic or internal commerce. In connexion with this aspect ous." I most cordially concur in the truth of every word of the subject it is necessary to notice, for the purpose of this, but regret most sincerely that his talents and great of correcting the error into which the Senator has fallen, influence should be exerted in a direction to paralyze the | that the tax upon merchandise or commerce is paid by efforts of the friends of river and harbor improvements, the consumer. To my mind nothing is clearer than that rels of flour for the English market; he pays the tonnage duties at Chicago, Cleveland, and Buffalo. When he arrives at New York he finds a farmer there with the same number of barrels who has paid no tonnage duty. Ar: been irregular and vascillating. Our Senator says, in riving at Liverage the tax, the Illinois farmer should have readved that much more for his flour than was paid to the New York farmer. I have only space to make suggestions on this and one other point. It is proposed to give the States power, as I understand it, to establish as many ports of entry as they please, and of course they must have power to compel all boats to land at the ports.

I am, gentlemen, very respectfully, your friend and ARCHIBALD WILLIAMS. bedient servant. Hons. JAS. KNOX, E. B. WASHBURNE, JESSE O. NOR-

RIVER AND HARBOR IMPROVEMENTS.

WASHINGTON, JANUARY 2, 1854.

Letter of Senator Douglas to the Governor of Illinois.

SIR: I learn from the public press that you have unler consideration the proposition to convene the Legislature in special session. In the event such a step shall be demanded by the public voice and necessities, I desire to invite your attention to a subject of great interest to our people, which may require legislative action. I refer to the establishment of some efficient and permanent system work well. But then the error is not in the system, but for river and harbor improvements. Those portions in the agents who administer, and the proper correction of the Union most deeply interested in internal navigation naturally feel that their interests have been neglected, if not paralyzed, by an uncertain, vascillating, and partial policy. Those who reside upon the banks of the Mississippi, or on the shores of the great Northern lakes, and whose lives and property are frequently exosed to the mercy of the elements for want of harbors of refuge and means of safety, have never been able to comprehend the force of that distinction between fresh and salt water which affirms the power and duty of Congress, works throughout the length and breadth of our widely- under the Constitution, to provide security to navigation so far as the tide ebbs and flows, and denies the existence of the right beyond the tidal mark. Our lawyers may have read in English books that, by the common law, all waters were deemed navigable so far as the tide extended, and no further; but they should also have learned from the same authority that the law was founded upon reason. ed by the history of legislation on all subjects; and if it and where the reason failed the rule ceased to exist. In proves any thing to the point, it proves that all attempts | England, where they have neither lake nor river, nor other water which is in fact navigable, except where the tide rolls its briny wave, it was natural that the law should conform to the fact, and establish that as a rule which the experience of all men proved to be founded in numerous or as flagrant in character as those which truth and reason. But it may well be questioned whether, if the common law had originated on the shores of Lake sioners are to be appointed; ports of entry are then to be purposes. The great error in the legislation of Congress Michigan—a wast inland sea, with an average depth of six established; then collecting officers are to be appointed at on this subject is not that too much money has been ap- hundred feet-it would have been deemed "not navipropriated for improvements which ought not to be made, gable" merely because the tide did not flow, and the water was fresh and well adapted to the uses and necessities of man. We therefore feel authorized to repudiate, But it is the omnibus principle that is condemned. as unreasonable and unjust, all injurious discriminations and in doing this they must determine how much shall be This is not the only kind of legislation to which that predicated upon salt water and tidal arguments, and to applied to each improvement which, in their opinion, it principle is applied. It is applied more or less by all insist that if the power of Congress to protect navigation ever completed any work of internal improvement comlegislative bodies to all kind of legislation. It applies has any existence in the Constitution, it reaches every mouth of the river. It would seem that this simple state- to every general appropriation bill ever passed by Con- portion of this Union where the water is in fact navigable, gress; and in 1850 there was a Congressional omnibus of and only ceases where the fact fails to exist. This power another kind, which has become the test of political or- has been affirmed in some form and exercised to a greater thodoxy with both of the great parties, and at whose or less extent by each successive Congress and every Adshrine the factions which opposed it at the time of its ministration since the adoption of the Federal Constitupassage now offer up daily their adorations. So I trust tion. All acts of Congress providing for the erection of it may ere long be in relation to internal improvement lighthouses, the planting of buoys, the construction of omnibuses large enough to embrace the great navigating piers, the removal of snags, the dredging of channels, the inspection of steamboat boilers, the carrying of life boats, in short, all enactments for the security of navigation and But allow the omnibus principle to be an unmitigated | the safety of life and property within our navigable waters,

> action will not answer. The irregular and vascillating policy which has marked our legislation upon this subject is ruinous. Whenever appropriations have been proposed for river and harbor improvements, and especially But it is said that the proposed system "would with- on the Northern lakes and the Western rivers, there has subjecting it to those perils in Congress; but if members | age, been beaten about four times out of five in one House or Congress or the other, or both, or by the Presidential and snag boats and other necessary machinery and implements; and by the time the work was fairly begun the appropriation was exhausted and further operations sus-pended. Failing to procure an additional appropriation at the next session, and perhaps for two, three, or four tax on commerce. This is substantially true, but under successive sessions, the Administration has construed the refusal of Congress to provide the funds for the prosecution of the works into an abandonment of the system, and has accordingly deemed it a duty to sell, at public aucficers of the United States, who must be continued whether the new system is or is not adopted. Under the counts of wrecks and explosions, fires and snags upon the rivers, the lakes, and the sea-coast. The responsi-bility of these appalling sacrifices of life and property were charged upon those who defeated the appropriations attempting to guess at the cost of collecting and keeping the money under the proposed plan, it is evident that by the interested sections and parties to bring their combined influence to bear upon Congress in favor of the reciently comprehensive to embrace the local interests and es in a majority of the Congressional districts of the Union. A legislative omnibus was formed, in which all sorts of works were crowded together, good and bad, wise and foolish, national and local, all crammed into one will ensure the construction of the improvements upon bill, and forced through Congress by the power of an the best plan and at the smallest cost will prove the organized majority, after the fearful and exhausting strugleast oppressive to the tax-payer and the most useful to gle of a night session. The bill would receive the votes f a majority in each House, not because any one Senstor or Representative approved all the items contained in think I have shown that in this respect the present it, but for the reason that humanity, as well as the stern demands of an injured and suffering constituency, receeds to say: "It requires no argument to prove—for every money to diminish the terrible loss of human life by the vested exclusively in Congress, the jurisdiction of the f navigation. The result was a simple re-enactment of the former scenes. Machinery, implements, and materials purchased, the works re-commenced, the money exhausted, subsequent appropriations withheld, and the operations suspended, without completing the improvements or contributing materially to the safety of navigation. Indeed, it may be well questioned whether, as a general rule, the money has been wisely and economically applied, and in many cases whether the expenditure has en productive of any useful results beyond the mere distribution of so much money among contractors, labor-ers, and superintendents in the favored localities; and in others whether it has not been of positive detriment to tonnage duties as the source from which funds were to

The great and growing interest of navigation is too im-

portant to be overlooked or disregarded. Mere negative

Far be it from my purpose to call in question the integrity, cience, or skill of those whose professional duty it was todevise the plan and superintend the construction of the works. But I do insist that from the nature of their profession and their habits of life they could not be expected to possess that local knowledge, that knowledge of currents and tides, the effects of storms, floods, and ice, always different and ever changing, in each locality of this ways different and ever changing, in each locality of this improvement to the navigation. Without depreciating the value of science or disregarding its precepts, I have no hesitation in saying that the opinion of an intelligent captain or pilot who, for a long series of years, had sailed out of and into or disregarding its precepts, I have no nesitation in saying that the opinion of an intelligent captain or pilot who, for a long series of years, had sailed out of and into a given port, in fair weather and foul, and who had carefully all daily watched the changes produced in the channel by the currents and storms, wrecks and other channel by the currents and storms, wereks and other and the channel by the currents and storms, were confidence than obstructions, would inspire me with more confidence than that of the most eminent professional gentleman, whose knowledge and science in the line of his profession were only equilled by his profound ignorance of all those local and pradical questions which ought to determine the site and plan of the proposed improvement. To me, therefore it is no longer a matter of surprise that errors therefore, it is no longer a matter of surprise that errors and blunders occur in the mode of constructing the works, and that felies and extravagance every where appear in the expendeure of the money. These evils seem to be inherent in hie system; at least, they have thus far protheir existence. We In addition as increased, it should be borne in mind that a large and intelligent portion of the American peo-

ple, con prising perhaps a majority of the Democratic party, are in the habit of considering these works as constituting a general system of internal improvements by the Federal Government, and therefore in violation of the reed of the Democratic party and of the Constitution of the United States. These two-fold objections, the one denying the constitutional fower and the other the expediency of appropriations from the National Treasury, seem to acquire additional strength and force in propor tion as the importance of the subject is enhanced and the necessity for more numerous and extensive improvements is created by the extension of our territory, the expansion of our settlements, and the development of the resources of the country. As I friend to the navigating interest, and especially identified by all the ties of affection, gratitude, and interest with that section of the Republic which is the most deeply interested in internal navigation, I see no hope for any more favorable results rom national appropriations that we have heretofore realized. If, then, we are to judge the system by its results, taking the past as a fair indication of what might reasonably be expected in the future, those of us who have struggled hardest to render it efficient and useful are compelled to confess that it has proven a miserable failfailed to accomplish the desired objects, it has had the effect to prevent local and private enterpiese from making the improvements under State authority by holding out the expectation that the Federal Government was

By way of illustration, let us suppose that twenty-five ears ago, when we first began to talk about the construcion of railroads in this country, the Federal Government had assumed to itself jurisdiction of all works of that lescription, to the exclusion of State authority and individual enterprise. In that event, does any one believe we would now have in the United States fourteen thousand niles of railroad completed, and fifteen thousand miles in addition under contract? It is to be presumed that, if our own Statehad prostrated itself in humble supplication at the feet of the Federal Government, and with folded arms had waited for appropriations from the National Treasury, instead of exerting State authority and stimulating and combining individual enterprise, we should now have in Illinois three thousand miles of railroad in process of construction? Let the history of internal improvements by the Federal Government be fairly written, and it will furnish conclusive answers to these interrogatories. For more than a quarter of a century the energies of the Na-tional Government, together with all the spare funds in the Treasury, were directed to the construction of a Macadamized road from Cumberland, in the State of Maryland, to Jefferson City, in the State of Missouri, without being able to complete one-third of the work. If the Govornment were unable to make three hundred miles of turnpike road in twenty-five years, how long would it make all the harbor and river improvements necessary to protect our white water and on a sea-cessary to the first improvement of harbors, yet even there are over a thousand merce on a sea-cessary to extensive that in forty years we have not been able to complete even the survey of one half of it, and on a lake and river navigation more than for the duties shall also give that any end to the success of the duties shall also give that any expectation of the duties shall also give the success of the four times as extensive as that sea-coast? These questions are worthy the serious consideration of those who think that improvements should be made for the benefit of the present generation as well as fer our remote posterity; for I am not aware that the Federal Government

The operations of the Government have not been sufficiently rapid to keep pace with the spirit of the age. The Cumberland road, when commenced, may have been well adapted to the purposes for which it was designed but after the lapse of a quarter of a century, and before any considerable portion of it could be finished, the whole was superseded and rendered useless by the introduction of the railroad system. One reason, and perhaps the principal cause, of the slow progress of all Government improvements consists in the fact that the appropriation fer any one object is usually too small to be of material service. It may be sufficient for the commencement of the work, but before it can be completed, or even so far advanced as to withstand the effects of storms, and floods, and the elements, the appropriation is exhausted and a has been done. The ruinous consequences of these small appropriations are well understood and seriously deprecated, but they arise from the necessity of the case, and constitute some of the evils inseparable from the policy. All experience proves that the numberless items of a river and harbor or internal improvement bill cannot pass, each by itself and upon its own merits, and that the friends of particular works will not allow appropriations to be made district to be of the sternest necessity and highest importance, and hence feels constrained to give his own the preference, or to defeat any bill which does not include it. The result is a legislative omnibus, in which all manner of objects are crowded together indiscriminately; and as there never is and never can be money enough Treasury to make adequate appropriations for the whole, and as the bill cannot pass unless each has something, of course the amount for each item must be reduced so low as to make it of little or no service, and thus render the whole bill almost a total loss. In this manner a large pertion of our people have been kept in a state of suspense and anxiety for more than half a century, with their topes always excited and their expectations never re-

I repeat that the policy heretofore pursued has proven worse than a failure. If we expect to provide facilities and securities for our navigating interests, we must adopt a system commensurate with our wants, one which will be just and equal in its operations upon lake, river, and ocean, wherever the water is navigable, fresh or salt, tide or no tide; a system which will not depend for its success upon the dubious and fluctuating issues of political campaigns and Congressional combinations; one which will be certain, uniform, and unvarying in its results. I know of no system better calculated to accomplish these objects than that which commanded the approbation of the founders of the Republic, was successively adopted on various occasions since that period, and directly referred to in the message of the President. It is evidently the system contemplated by the framers of the Constitution when they incorporated into that instrument the clause in relation to tonnage duties by the States with the assent of Congress. The debates show that this provision was inserted for the express purpose of enabling the States to levy duties of tomage to make harbor and other improvements for the benefit of navigation. It was objected States over harbor and river improvements, without the consent or supervision of the Federal Government, might be so exercised as to conflict with the Congressional regu-lations in respect to commerce. In order to avoid this objection, and at the same time reserve to the States the power of making the necessary improvements consistent with such rules as should be prescribed by Congress for the regulation of commerce, the provision was modified and adopted in the form in which we now find, it in the Constitution, to wit: "No State shall lay duties of tonnage except by the consent of Congress." It is evident from the debates that the framers of the Constitution looked to be derived for improvements in navigation. The

The first of these acts provided that all expenses for the support of lighthouses, beacons, buoys, and public piers should be paid out of the national treasury, on the condition that the States in which the same should be situadition that the States in which the same should be situated respectively should cede to the United States the said works, "together with the lands and tenements thereunto belonging, and together with the jurisdiction of the same." A few months afterwards the same Congress passed an act consenting that the States of Rhode Island, and Georgia might levy tonnage duties for the purpose of improving certain harbors and rivers within the referred to in the measure than when constructing river and harbor improvements must, under either plan, be defrayed by a tax upon commerce in the first instance, and finally upon the whole people interested in the improvement, than when constructing river and harbor improvements must, under either plan, be defrayed by a tax upon commerce in the first instance, and finally upon the whole people interested in the improvement, than when constructing river and harbor improvements must, under either plan, be defrayed by a tax upon commerce in the first instance, and finally upon the whole people interested in the improvement, than when constructing river and harbor improvements must, under either plan, be defrayed by a tax upon commerce in the first instance, and finally upon the whole people interested in the improvement, then when constructing river and harbor improvements must, under either plan, be defrayed by a tax upon commerce in the first instance, and finally upon the whole people interested in the improvement, than when construction of the structed by the Federal Government. Hence, inasmuch as the expenses of constructing river and harbor improvements must, under either plan, be defrayed by a tax upon commerce in the first instance, and finally upon the whole people interested in the improvement. Hence, inasmuch as the expenses of constructing river and harbor improvements must, under either plan, be defrayed by a tax upon commerce in the first instance, and finally upon the upon the province of the plan tax upon commerce in the first instance, and finally upon the upon the upo Maryland, and Georgia might levy tonnage duties for the purpose of improving certain harbors and rivers within their respective limits. This contradictory legislation upon a subject of great national importance, although commenced by the first Congress, and frequently suspended to the first Congress, and frequently suspended irregular—sometimes granted and at other ward irregular—sometimes granted and at other wards and irregular—sometimes granted and at other wards the formal state. The major residual properties of Congress, at various times and for limited the consent of Congress, at various times and for limited periods, in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Ca-

periods, in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Ca-rolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and perhaps other States. Indeed, there has never been a time, since the Declaration of Independence, when tonnage duties have not been collected under State authority for the improvement of rivers or har-bors, or both. The last act giving the consent of Congress to the collection of these duties was passed for the benefit of the port of Baltimore in 1850, and will not expire

Thus it will be seen that the proposition to pass a general law giving the consent of Congress to the imposition of tonnage duties according to a uniform rule, and upon equal terms, in all the States and Territories of the Union, does not contemplate the introduction of a new principle into our legislation upon this subject. It only proposes to convert a partial and fluctuating policy into a permanent and efficient system.

If this proposition should receive the sanction of Con-gress and be carried into successful operation by the States, it would withdraw river and harbor improvements from the perils of the political arena, and commit them to the fostering care of the local authorities, with a steady and unceasing source of revenue for their prosecution. The system would be plain, direct, and simple, in respect to harbor improvements. Each town and city would have charge of the improvement of its own harbor, and would be authorized to tax its own commerce to the extent necessary for its construction. The money could be applied to no other object than the improvement of the harbor, and no higher duties could be levied than were necessary for that purpose. There would seem to be no danger of the power being abused; for, in addition to the restrictions, limitations, and conditions which should be embraced in the laws conferring the consent of Congress, self-interest will furnish adequate and ample assurances and motives for the faithful execution of the trusts. If any town whose harbor needs improvement should fail to impose the duties and make the necessary works, such neglect would inevitably tend to drive the commerce to some rival port, which would use all the means in its power to render its harbor safe and commodious, and af ford all necessary protection and facilities to navigation and trade. If, on the other hand, any place should at-tempt to impose higher duties than will be absolutely necessary for the construction of the requisite improvements, this line of policy, to the extent of the excess, would have the same deleterious effects upon its prosperity. The same injurious influences would result from errors and blunders in the plan of the work, or from extravagance and corruption in the expenditure of the money. Hence each locality and every citizen and person interested therein would have a direct and personal interest in the adoption of a wise plan, and in securing strict economy and entire fidelity in the expenditure of the money. While upon the take to construct a railroad to the Pacific ocean, and to rivers the plan of operations would not be so direct and

States, such States may enter into compacts with each other, by which they may, under their joint authority, levy the duties and improve the navigation. In this manner Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey could enter into a compact for the improvement of the Delaware river, by which each would appoint one commissioner, and the three commissioners constitute a superintend the expenditure of the money. The six States bordering on the Ohio river, in like manner, could each appoint a commissioner, and the six constitute a board for the improvement of the navigation of that river from Pittsburgh to the Mississippi. The same plan could be applied to the Mississippi, by which the nine States bordering upon that stream could each appoint one commissioner, and the nine form a board for the removal of space and other obstructions in the channel from the Falls of St. Anthony to the Gulf of Mexico. There seems to be no difficulty, therefore, in the execution of the plan be obtained for finishing it or even protecting that which where the water course lies in two or more States, or forms the boundary thereof in whole or in part; and where the river is entirely within the limits of any one State, like the Illinois or Alabama, it may be improved in such manner as the Legislature may prescribe, subject only to such conditions and limitations as may be contained in the act of Congress giving its consent. All the necessities and difficulties upon this subject seem to have been foreseen and provided for in the same clause of the for the completion of others which are supposed to be of Constitution wherein it is declared, in effect, that, with paramount importance unless theirs are embraced in the the consent of Congress, tonnage duties may be levied for ame bill. Each member seems to think the work in his own | the improvement of rivers and harbors, and that the several States may enter into compacts with each other for that purpose whenever it shall become necessary, subject only to such rules as Congress shall prescribe for the re-

· It only remains for me to notice some of the objections

gulation of commerce.

shall form the boundary of or be situated in two or more

which have been urged to this system. It has been said that tonuage duties are taxes upon the commerce of the country, which must be paid in the end by the consumers of the articles bearing the burden. I do not feel disposed to question the soundness of this proposition. I presume the same is true of all the duties, tolls, and charges upon all public works, whether constructed by Government or individuals. The State of New York derives a revenue of more than two millions of dollars a year from her canals. Of course this is a tax upon the commerce of the country, and is borne by those who are interested in and benefited by it. This tax is a blessing or a burden, dependant upon the fact whether it has the effect to diminish or increase the cost of transportation. If we could not have enjoyed the benefit of the canal without the payment of tolls, and if, by its construction and the payment, the cost of transportation has been reduced to one-tenth the sum which we would have been compelled to have paid without it, who would not be willing to make a still further contribution to the security and facilities of navigation, if thereby the price of freights are to be reduced in a still greater ratio? The tolls upon our own canal are a tax upon commerce, yet we cheerfully submit to the payment, for the reason that they were indispensable to the construction of a great work, which has had the effect to reduce the cost of transportation between the Lakes and the Mississippi far below what it would have been if the canal had not been made. All the charges on the fourteen thousand miles of railroad now in operation in the different States of this Union are just so many taxes upon commerce and travel; yet we do several different offences were stated as alleged according not repudiate the whole railroad system on that account, to the provisions of the Iowa law. It was objected by nor object to the payment of such reasonable charges as are necessary to defray the expenses of constructing and operating them. But it may be said that if all the railcoads and canals were built with funds from the national treasury, and were then thrown open to the uses of commerce and travel free of charge, the rates of transportation would be less than they now are. It may be that the rates of transportation would be less, but would our taxes be reduced thereby? No matter who is entrusted with the construction of the works, somebody must foot the bill. If the Federal Government undertake to make railroads and canals and river and harbor improvements, somebedy must pay the expenses. In order to meet this enlarged expenditure it would be necessary to augment the revenue by increased taxes upon the commerce of the country. The whole volume of revenue which now fills

most useful to commerce. It requires no argument to prove—for every day's experience teaches us—that public works of every description can be made at a much smaller cost by private enterprise, or by the local authorities directly interested in the improvement, than when constructed by the Federal Government. Hence, inasmuch as the expenses of constructing river and harbor imunderstood the difference have attempted to exist projected dice against this plan for the increases and only after running through the German State. The trapic residing upon those rivers did not complain a state of the projected to pay defies for the improvement of the difference of the purpose. No improvements in the navigation. Such was not the fact. No duties we may for any such purpose. No improvements in the navigation was after made or contemplated by those who ex

tion were ever made or contemplated by those who ex acted the tolls. Taxes were extorted from the navigating interest by the petty sovereigns through whose dominions the rivers run, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the pomp, and ceremonies, and follies of vicious and corrupt courts. The complaint was that grievous and innecessary burdens were imposed on navigation without expending any portion of the money for its protection and improvement. Their complaints were just. They should have protested, if they had lived under a Government where the voice of the people could be heard, against the payment of any more or higher tolls than were necessary for the improvement of the navigation, and have insisted that the funds collected should be applied to that purpose and none other. In short, a plan similar to the one now proposed would have been a full and complete redress of all their grievances upon this subject. In conclusion, I will state that my object in addressing

you this communication is to invite your special attention to so much of the President's message as relates to river and harbor improvements, with the view that when the Legislature shall assemble, either in special or general session, the subject may be distinctly submitted to their consideration for such action as the great interests of commerce may demand.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your friend.

nd fellow-citizen, JOEL A. MATTESON.

Governor of the State of Illinois.

APPOINTMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT, By and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

COLLECTORS OF THE CUSTOMS. HENRY F. HANCOCK, for Washington, North Carolina-Gideon Bradford, for Providence, Rhode Island. GEORGE H. REYNOLDS, for Bristol and Warren, R. L. JOHN LYNCH, for Richmond, Virginia. GEORGE TURNER, for Newport, Rhode Island. ... HENRY HOBART, for New London, Connecticut. JAMES LYTLE, for Presque Isle, (Erie,) Pennsylvania. EBEN W. ALLEN, for Nantucket, Massachusetts. WILLIAM BARTOLL, for Marblehead, Massachusetts.
WILLIAM S. POMEROY, for Fairfield, Connecticut. SAMUEL T. SAWYER, for Norfolk and Portsmouth, Va. HUGH ARCHER, for St. Mark's, Florida. EZRA CHESEBRO, for Stonington, Connecticut. JOHN S. PARKER, for Cherrystone, Virginia. JOHN A. SHERRAD, for Burlington, New Jersey. JULIUS A. BARRATTE, for St. Mary's, Georgia. ROBERT N. McMillan, for Teche, (Franklin,) Louisians EPHRAIM K. SMART, for Belfast, Maine.

A PAPER TO BE WORN IN THE HATS OF APPLICANTS.

dy fixens" of a military man, we are inclined to exclaim the Constitution, that where the river to be improved even with a sigh, "Ah! why did I not enter the Navy or Army; what a pleasant time I would have had!" My object, Messrs. Editors, is to place before ambitious parents the true state of the case. The fortunate youth of fifteen who obtains admission into the Navy has to serve as an apprentice, for it is nothing else, six years, for a compensation of about sixty cents per day. Out of this board, which would levy the duties, prescribe the mode of their collection, devise the plan of the improvement, and examination he receives about \$1.60 per day; this he receives for about eight years. He now receives a commission as a Lieuténant and a compensation of about \$3.50 per day, and sometimes less. In this position he serves twenty-two years. His next step is a Commander, for which he receives about \$5.621 per day. In this position he remains thirteen years. His last step is to that sition he remains thirteen years. of Captain, where he remains fourteen years before he commands a squadron, and his daily pay not quite equal to a California mechanic. By allowing him to be fourteen years of age on entering the Navy, it will be found that he will be just SEVENTY-SEVEN on receiving the command of a squadron. It was found on correct calculation that but three per cent. of those who enter the Navy reach the foot of the highest grade, but two per cent. the middle, and but one per cent. near the head or the head of the list. I will venture to asert that any young man of common education and correct habits who enters any of the mechanical branches will do far better than wasting his time in the Navy. It is a life of toil, hardships, and disapcointments. To those who are anxious to enter the Navy, let them look before they leap. Any good mechanic of industrious habits can certainly make from \$2 to \$2.50 per day in any of the Middle and Northern sections of this country, and in the Southern from \$3 to \$8 per day. This is far better than entering the Navy; for in one instance you are under the control of others, while as a mechanic you are your own master. In fact, all the trades or mechanical professions offer better openings for young men than either the Army or the Navy.
ONE WHO KNOWS.

> THE SECTABIAN EXCITEMENT AT CINCINNATI.-The Cincinnati Gazette of Thursday has the subjoined paragraph: "During yesterday afternoon some drunken fellews vent out to the tunnel and circulated among the laborers statement that the Freemen contemplated turning out in procession, with the intention of attacking the Cathedral and Bishop's house, and destroying those edifices. Soon after dusk, in the vicinity of the Cathedral, there were assembled over two thousand Irishmen, armed with clubs and pistols, and some with guns, to protect the property from being attacked. They remained about the Cathedral until a late hour, when, at the solicitation of the Mayor, Capt. Lukens, and Archbishop Purceil, they quietly dispersed. Fearful that there might be trouble the police were detained in the watch-house until the crowd had dispersed. There was no truth whatever in the statement that an attack was contemplated by the

> MAINE LAW IN IOWA .- The Supreme Court of Iowa, at its recent session, decided the liquor law of that State to be constitutional. The defendants in the case were indicted for selling liquor by the glass. They pleaded that the law was unconstitutional; that the indictments should run against the house in which the liquor was sold and not against the person selling it. In the indictments the defence that the law relating to indictments provide that every indictment shall charge but one specified offence, and that the liquor law, being repugnant in its provisions to this law, is impracticable and could not be en-forced. The Court over-ruled all these objections, and sustained the indictments, and the decision of the Court was against defendants.

> A LIVE ELECTRICAL EEL .- Capt. Nathaniel E. Atwood of Provincetown, recently sent Prof. Agassiz an electrical cel weighing thirty pounds, which he succeeded in capturing and placing alive in the well of the schooner Golden Eagle, whence it was taken on arriving at Boston and conveyed to Cambridge, living several hours to perform his experiments, the first of the kind ever given in that